

- Prep Time: 15 minutes
- Cooking Time: 8 to 10 minutes (Air Fryer dependent)
- Resting Time: 2 to 3 minutes
- Total Time: 25 minutes
- Yield: 2 Individual Ramekins (Serves 2)
- Skill / Intensity Level: Intermediate (Low Prep Effort, High Precision Timing)

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Recipe Intensity & Effort Breakdown

To help you seamlessly navigate the preparation process, here is the intensity and precision breakdown for each stage of making Air Fryer Lava Cakes:

1. Chocolate Melting & Emulsification (Intensity: Low / Precision: Medium)
 - Gently melting high-quality bittersweet chocolate with butter requires patience.

Overheating can cause the chocolate to seize or separate, so using low power intervals or a gentle double-boiler technique ensures a silky smooth emulsion base.

2. Batter Mixing & Aeration (Intensity: Low / Precision: High)

- Whisking the eggs and sugar to the proper pale, slightly thickened texture provides structure. However, folding in the dry flour must be done delicately—over-mixing develops gluten, resulting in a dense, chewy cake rather than a tender crumb.

3. Ramekin Preparation & Dusting (Intensity: Low / Precision: High)

- Thoroughly greasing the ramekins with butter and coating them with unsweetened cocoa powder is critical. This step guarantees the cakes release effortlessly onto a plate without tearing the delicate molten center.

4. Air Fryer Baking & Timing Control (Intensity: Medium / Precision: Very High)

- Air fryer models circulate heat at different intensities. Because the boundary between a perfectly liquid lava core and a fully cooked chocolate muffin is a matter of 60 to 90 seconds, strict visual monitoring and precise timing are essential.

Key Ingredients

To achieve the best possible texture and depth of chocolate flavor, quality matters:

- 3.5 oz (100g) High-Quality Bittersweet or Semisweet Chocolate (60% to 70% cocoa solids, chopped into small pieces)
- ¼ cup (½ stick / 56g) Unsalted Butter (cut into cubes, plus extra for greasing)
- 1 large Whole Egg (at room temperature)
- 1 large Egg Yolk (at room temperature)
- 3 tablespoons Granulated Sugar (or powdered sugar)

- 1 pinch Fine Sea Salt
- 2 tablespoons All-Purpose Flour (sifted)
- 1 tablespoon Unsweetened Cocoa Powder (for dusting the ramekins)
- ½ teaspoon Pure Vanilla Extract
- *Optional for Serving:* Powdered sugar for dusting, fresh raspberries, vanilla bean ice cream, or fresh mint leaves.

Step-by-Step Instructions

Step 1: Prep and Dust the Ramekins

Take two 6-ounce oven-safe ceramic ramekins. Generously coat the entire interior of each ramekin with softened butter. Add a tablespoon of unsweetened cocoa powder into one ramekin, tilt and turn it to cover all bottom and side surfaces, then tap the excess into the second ramekin and repeat. *Dusting with cocoa powder instead of flour prevents white streaks on the finished cake while adding extra dark chocolate flavor.*

Step 2: Melt the Chocolate and Butter

In a heatproof glass bowl, combine the chopped bittersweet chocolate and cubed butter. Microwave in 20-second intervals, stirring thoroughly between each interval, until the mixture is completely melted and glossy. Stir in the vanilla extract and a pinch of salt. Set aside for 3 to 5 minutes to cool slightly so it won't cook the eggs in the next step.

Step 3: Beat the Eggs and Sugar

In a separate medium mixing bowl, combine the whole egg, egg yolk, and granulated sugar. Using a hand whisk, beat vigorously for about 1 to 2 minutes until the mixture turns pale yellow, slightly thickened, and frothy.

Step 4: Combine into a Silky Batter

Slowly pour the melted chocolate mixture into the beaten eggs, whisking constantly until fully incorporated. Gently sift the 2 tablespoons of all-purpose flour directly over the chocolate mixture. Using a rubber spatula, gently fold the flour into the batter just until no streaks remain. Take care not to over-mix.

Step 5: Fill the Ramekins

Divide the thick chocolate batter evenly between the two prepared ramekins, filling them roughly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way to the top. Smooth the tops lightly with your spatula.

Step 6: Air Fry to Molten Perfection

Preheat your air fryer to 370°F (188°C) for 3 minutes. Carefully place the filled ramekins into the air fryer basket, ensuring there is space between them for warm air to circulate. Air fry at 370°F for 8 to 10 minutes.

Crucial Timing Note: At the 8-minute mark, check the cakes. The edges should look set, firm, and golden brown, while the center center should still have a gentle wiggle when you lightly shake the basket. If the center looks completely liquid, cook for an additional 1 minute.

Step 7: Rest, Invert, and Serve

Using heat-resistant oven mitts or tongs, carefully remove the hot ramekins from the air fryer. Allow them to rest undisturbed on a wire rack for 2 to 3 minutes. Run a thin, sharp knife around the inside edges of the ramekins to ensure the top edges are loosened. Place a small dessert plate over the top of each ramekin, invert quickly, and gently lift the ramekin off.

Dust immediately with powdered sugar and serve warm with a scoop of cold vanilla bean ice cream.

Chef's Tips for Success

- **Use Bar Chocolate, Not Chips:** Chocolate chips contain stabilizers that prevent them from melting into a smooth liquid core. Always use a high-quality baking chocolate bar or

chocolate disks for the truest molten flow.

- **Know Your Air Fryer:** Air fryers vary significantly in fan strength and heating element proximity. Test your first attempt at 8 minutes; if your air fryer runs exceptionally hot, 7 minutes might be sufficient.
- **Room Temperature Eggs Are Essential:** Cold eggs right out of the refrigerator will chill the melted butter and chocolate, causing the batter to seize up.

Nutritional Profile

The following nutrition estimate is calculated per serving (1 individual lava cake, without garnishes or ice cream):

- Calories: 410 kcal
- Total Fat: 27 g
 - Saturated Fat: 16 g
 - Trans Fat: 0.5 g
- Cholesterol: 155 mg
- Sodium: 120 mg
- Total Carbohydrates: 37 g
 - Dietary Fiber: 4 g
 - Sugars: 26 g
- Protein: 6 g
- Potassium: 280 mg

- Calcium: 45 mg

- Iron: 3.8 mg